



## NEWARK PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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### NEWARK TO RE-ROUTE WATER SUPPLY FOR HALF OF CITY

The City of Newark will begin re-routing the water supply for about half the city's homes and businesses next week to make way for a state highway construction project.

There will be no shutoff of water service to anyone. However, the temporary change may cause some loss of pressure and discoloration of the water in the eastern half of the city, particularly in parts of downtown and the Ironbound.

Officials emphasized that the water will still be safe for drinking, and there should be no increase in health or fire hazards in the affected area.

The project -- the largest undertaking by the Division of Water Supply since the 1920s -- is necessary because the city's principal north-south main is in the path of the new Interstate 78 highway now under construction through the South Ward. A new section of main has been built under the submerged highway, but it cannot be connected until the water is shut off in the existing line.

The diversion of water will begin next Thursday (March 20), and is to be completed in about four days. If all goes according to schedule, the new line should be in full use by April 15.

City crews will be working around the clock to monitor the flow and quality of water at various points around the city, it was reported by Daniel Berardinelli, director of the Division of Water Supply. If any major problems develop, the whole project can be halted until they are corrected.

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Berardinelli said the project has been in planning for a year, and numerous precautions and contingency plans have been developed. At the same time, he stressed that no serious difficulties are expected, but he also said that precise predictions are hard to make. Parts of the system are a century old, he said, and the diversion is a "first of its kind in our history."

The total cost of the operation -- which also cannot be predicted at this point -- is to be borne by the state.

The supply line that is to be cut off runs the entire length of the city, from Belleville to Elizabeth. It carries water from the Wanaque system <sup>and Elizabeth</sup> to the eastern half of the city -- roughly, everything east of Branch Brook Park, Norfolk Street, Belmont Avenue and Weequahis Park.

The area accounts for about half of the 80 to 90 million gallons of water consumed on an average day in Newark. Located within the area are 2,500 large users of water, including downtown businesses and Ironbound industries. Among the big consumers are a brewery, and various chemical companies and laundries.

The diversion of water is expected to stir up sediment in many old mains. Berardinelli said this may affect the color, the odor and the taste of the water, but it is not dangerous. "The sediment is sterile," the water engineer said.

During the changeover to the new main, the water pressure in some of the affected area may drop, although pumps and regulators will be used to keep it as high as possible. Pressure now averages 45 pounds a square inch, and officials say they can maintain at least 30 pounds at all times.

Berardinelli said the effects will be minimal in the northern and southern ends of the city. The biggest impact is expected in the South Broad Street area -- the section bounded roughly by High, Coast, Walnut, Jefferson and Wright streets.

The pressure should be adequate at all times for firefighting, Berardinelli said. Part of the area is served by special high-pressure hydrants, which are on a separate system. In case of an emergency, water can be directed from the high-pressure network in the normal water system.

The work was originally scheduled for December, but was delayed because of weather. It is being done now so the new connection can be in use before the summer periods of peak consumption.

The line which must be replaced is 60 inches in diameter -- one of the largest in the system. It brings water into Newark from a Belleville reservoir on the North, and the Elizabethtown Consolidated Water Co. on the south. The line, built in the late 1920s, carries about 40 million gallons a day.

The big line crosses Route 78 near Ridgewood and Watson avenues. A contractor hired by the state, A. Tomae & Sons, has already laid about 500 feet of new main under the new highway. As soon as the water is off, the new link will be connected to the old line, and the portion of pipe that is blocking the highway will be removed.

James Conley, senior engineer for the water division, said that once the old main is shut off, "we will have to supplement our supply from different sources." The Elizabethtown system will double its supply of water to Newark during the period -- from about 12 to 25 million gallons a day. For the northern end of the line, the city will use pressure regulators to keep up a steady flow.

The eight-mile-long supply line has four major outlets in the city, and two of them must be shut completely during the changeover. This means the direction of water movement will be reversed in many old mains.

"This is the largest undertaking of its type by the Division of Water Supply," said Conley. "Everybody will be involved."

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Conley said no special water conservation measures will be needed during the project. The cloudiness in the water should subside within a few days, officials said. However, once the new main is in use and the water flow is restored to its old pattern, there may be another few days of discolored water.

During the project, Conley said, the division will install two new regulator valves in the valves. This will insure that future breaks or repair projects will not affect as wide an area as the current construction.

Berardinelli is moving his headquarters temporarily from the division's office in Little Falls to the water distribution office at 239 Central Ave. Individuals with questions or special problems can call the Division of Water Supply at 733-3655.

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